NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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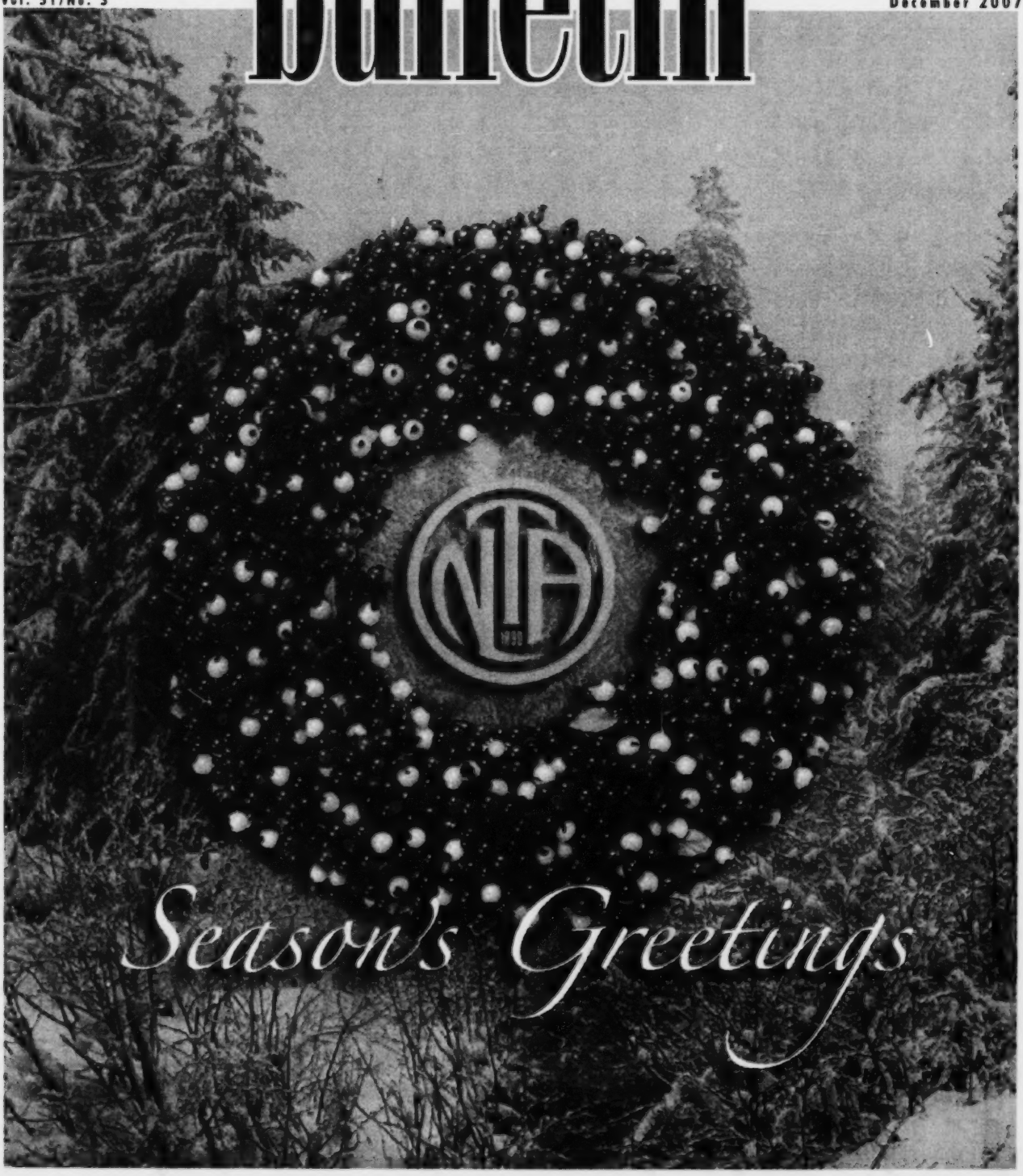

Up Front from the President

This moment is a gift; that is why this moment is called the present; Enjoy it.
– Allan Johnson

It has often been said that we should live for today and not necessarily for the relaxation or prosperity that tomorrow may bring. Perhaps this is true to a certain extent and from a certain point of view, but it could also be said that we usually look forward to our holidays and to the Christmas season in particular.

After the preparations, the shopping and the actual day itself, we often look ahead to some "holiday" time with family. For some of us, this may be the most enjoyable part of the season; for others it might be Christmas Day itself, where seeing the joy on the faces of our loved ones and hearing and receiving their expressions of delight and appreciation are indeed priceless. The gift of giving can be the most wonderful gift of all.

I am always amazed, dazzled and proud of the work that teachers do in the "giving" department and this is especially true at Christmas time. The endless tasks involved in Christmas concert preparations, teachers' extensive involvement in the good works in our communities, the food hamper drives, the caroling for our seniors and others with our students, the "Happy Tree" donations, our Foster Parent Plan fund raisers, clothing and toy projects, special contributions to the Salvation Army Christmas kettles; these are merely some of the many acts of kindness teachers carry out with the students in their care. The moments experienced are surely very special gifts.

Teachers are, by their very nature "givers", as we have given of ourselves for the continued betterment of society in advancing the cause of education, in reaching out to and working with the children of our province. We do these things throughout the year because we want to, because it makes a positive difference to the lives of our young people and to the fabric of our society.

As we continue our endeavors toward improvements to teachers' working conditions and through our efforts to implement recommendations in the Commission Reports, we are hopeful and desirous that the "giving" that teachers do, in areas which they need not and should not be giving, will be lessened in some cases and eliminated in others. The areas are well known to us, such as excessive supervision, unnecessary meetings and paperwork in Special Services and completing running records, language profiling and KinderStart programs without the appropriate provision of substitute days. Providing for teachers in these collective bargaining areas including specific and significant improvements in discretionary release time – for family and personal leave and for professional development – is of critical importance to us all. These are issues of professional respect which government must address.

In the story, *The Gift of the Magi*, a young couple with great feeling and tenderness for one another, sacrifice the only thing that they possibly can so that each may give the other a special gift at Christmas. The young man sells his sole possession, his pocket watch, to buy his loved one combs for her hair. She cuts her long hair and barters to exchange it for a watch chain for him. Incredulous, but then with pure understanding of each other's gift, they both love and care for each other that much more. The story is inspirational. So too is the work of teachers in this province on behalf of the students whom they teach. Such inspiration requires appropriate and tangible evidence of support and we will be tireless as we continue to work toward securing this support.

On behalf of your Provincial Executive, let me offer you my most sincere wishes for a very merry Christmas and a happy and joyful New Year.

May you and your families enjoy the gift of the moment – the "present" – but also the gifts that tomorrow will bring you.

And thank you all so much for the inspiration you have given to your students.

Sean

THE
bulletin

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2006-08 School Board-Teacher Liaison Committees

The 2006-08 School Board-Teacher Liaison Committees have been established in accordance with Article 5 of the Collective Agreement (Article 16 in Labrador West) to provide the opportunity for teachers to discuss with representatives of their employer, local issues such as board policies, physical conditions of the school, curriculum issues, and holiday schedules, that impact on their work life yet are not grievable items under the Collective Agreement. Your Association sees these Committees as being valuable avenues for dealing with employer/employee issues at the local district level.

A copy of an NLTA Infosheet explaining the operation of School Board-Teacher Liaison Committees, the Liaison Committee Handbook and a listing of NLTA representatives for each of the committees can be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca) under "Publications – School Board-Teacher Liaison Committees".

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

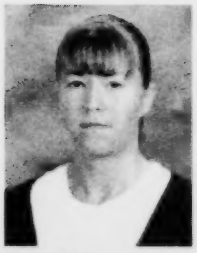
NEWS

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

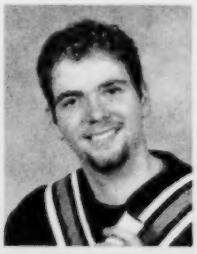
NLTA Scholarship winners announced

Six Newfoundland and Labrador students who completed high school last June have been awarded NLTA scholarships for 2006-07. They are: Brittany Baker (Holy Spirit High School), daughter of Angela Allen-Baker, Paradise; Aaron Bolt (Tricentia Academy), son of Dianne Bolt, Arnold's Cove; Alison Greene (Fogo Island Central Academy), daughter of Gerard and Maxine Greene, Tilting; Kristine O'Rielly (St. Gabriel's All-Grade), daughter of Kevin O'Rielly, St. Brendan's; Stephanie Powell (Roncalli Central High), daughter of Connie Powell, Port au Choix; and Charlotte Warren (Southwest Arm Academy), daughter of Barbara Warren, Little Heart's Ease.

The scholarships are awarded annually to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA and are valued at $1,000 each. Awards are based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.



Brittany Baker



Aaron Bolt

Alison Greene

Kristine O'Rielly

Stephanie Powell

Charlotte Warren

NLTA Medal winner announced

Nicole Dawe, a native of Conception Bay South, has been awarded the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association Medal for the 2007 Spring Convocation at Memorial University. Nicole convocated this past May with a conjoint degree in Music and Music Education. She completed her internship at Holy Trinity High in Torbay. Nicole is currently substituting in the Eastern School District and is very involved with many musical organizations including Conception Bay South Music School, Shallaway – *Newfoundland and Labrador Youth in Chorus*, and Lady Cove Women's Choir.

NLTA President Sean Noah presents Nicole Dawe with her 2007 NLTA Medal.

The NLTA Medal is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the Faculty of Education who, during his/her academic career has made an outstanding contribution to the Faculty of Education and to the University. The recipient must be a graduating student and have a consistently good academic record in the professional courses required for the degree. The award is made by Memorial University on the recommendation of the Dean of Education.

ST. JOHN'S

Students turn out in big numbers to support RealTime Cancer

On Saturday, September 29, students from St. Peter's Junior High in Mount Pearl took part in the eighth annual RealTime Cancer Climb. Over 400 participants from participating schools embarked up Signal Hill in boisterous spirits, eagerly facing their challenge upward.

St. Peter's Junior High students support RealTime Cancer.

The ongoing challenge among supporting schools at the RealTime Cancer Climb has been to hold the greatest percentage of students from a school's total population. This year's winning school was St. Peter's Junior High and they received a banner to mark this achievement at their Thanksgiving Day Assembly.

Congratulations is extended to all participants, particularly those schools which continue to support this cause with great enthusiasm. The RealTime Cancer Climb organizers are looking forward to even bigger numbers for next year!

Schools joins Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program

This year, 97 Grade 9 students at Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) in St. John's came out in force and joined the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award Program under the direction of MDJH teacher, Rose Drover. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Program is an exciting self-development program available to all young people aged 14 to 25. The program equips young people with life skills to make a difference to themselves, their communities and the world.

To date, 88 students from MDJH have completed the practice journey of their program with a day hike from Cape Spear to Maddox Cove. The first group of 25 completed the hike from Bauline East to Herring Cove in the pouring rain! The expedition part of the program consists of an overnight. So far, 68 students have completed the expedition and had fun doing it.

The award consists of a program of activities you can do in your spare time, and in many cases, students earn credit for activities they already do! The other three components of the program are service, skills, and physical recreation, and you simply have to choose one activity under each of these categories and do it for a set length of time. There are three Awards to try for – Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Gold takes the longest to achieve and is the hardest one to try for so participants usually start off on the Bronze award.

For further information on the program contact the provincial Duke of Edinburgh office at www.dukeofed.nf.net/ to start your junior high students in this worthwhile program … plus they earn extra credit in senior high!

Macdonald Drive Junior High students enjoy a day hike as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award Program.

Teacher honored for bone marrow donation

Congratulations are extended to Deborah Pinto, a special services teacher at Holy Heart High School in St. John's, who was recently awarded the Canada Blood Services National Award for Bone Marrow Donation in Ottawa. In March 2006 Deborah donated her bone marrow to an unrelated child. Two months later she was informed that this child needed more and she did not hesitate to donate her stem cells. This child is alive and healthy celebrating the gift of life today due to the generosity of individuals such as Deborah.

Deborah Pinto

Students participate in Fly the Flag Remembrance ceremony

Students from Mr. Foss's Grade 8 class at Holy Cross Junior High School in St. John's attended the Fly the Flag of Remembrance ceremony on November 1 at Confederation Building. The ceremony honours the memory of those who died in the service of their country in all wars.

Students enjoyed listening to speeches by honoured guests, music from the cadet bands and had an opportunity to meet veterans and Premier Danny Williams. The Fly the Flag of Remembrance ceremony is an annual event and schools are encouraged to attend.

Holy Cross Junior High students attend the Fly the Flag of Remembrance ceremony at Confederation Building.

Macdonald Drive Junior High enjoys busy fall activities

On October 19, Macdonald Drive Junior High (MDJH) held a Healthy Commotion to coincide with its 3rd annual Gulu Walk. The school had been abuzz for weeks promoting participation in the Gulu Walk. The Gulu Walk is a one-day worldwide event focused on raising awareness and support for the abandoned children of northern Uganda.

Two Grade 9 Religion classes took on the project of spreading the word about Gulu by making posters and placing a message about Gulu on every student locker. These two classes also sold oranges and orange Gulu bracelets as a fundraiser for this project.

Students and staff participated in a school-wide assembly with two groups of African performers (the drummers were amazing!), speakers from Northern Uganda and a slide show about Gulu and the Gulu Walk. Students and staff, most wearing orange, left the school as a group and walked twice around Kenny's Pond.

"This event was very successful," says Joan McCue, School Counsellor at Macdonald Drive Junior High. "Besides getting in some physical activity and having some fun, students were also able to spread the word about Gulu!"

Macdonald Drive Junior High takes part in the 3rd annual Gulu Walk to raise awareness and support for the abandoned children of northern Uganda.

Macdonald Drive Junior High also held its annual Breast Cancer Fundraiser on October 24. The "Get in the Pink" campaign was a great success and thanks to the generosity of students and staff, the school raised $215.66. During recess and lunch, the school's Random Acts of Kindness Club members collected donations and distributed the "Get in the Pink" stickers and pink ribbons.

MDJH's Random Acts of Kindness Club members distribute "Get in the Pink" stickers and ribbons.

WITLESS BAY

Halloween Extravaganza helps raise funds for new playground

St. Bernard's Elementary in Witless Bay held their annual Halloween Extravaganza on October 31. This is an annual event that sees community members – young and old – joining the student population for an afternoon of excitement. The event is organized and

run by parent volunteers and everyone looks forward to and enjoys the games of chance, bake sale, ticket spins and costumes. Due to a commitment from Saturn to maich all funds raised by the school, the $800 raised at the Halloween Extravaganza means St. Bernard's is now $1,600 closer to their new playground! The Cool Kids Team at St. Bernard's would like to say a big thank you to all who attended or helped out in any way and look forward to seeing you next year.

Dressing up is only part of the fun at St. Bernard's Elementary annual Halloween Extravaganza.

SPANIARD'S BAY

Students participate in annual Harvest Run

On October 10, students from Grades 3 to 9 at Holy Redeemer Elementary in Spaniard's Bay participated in the annual Harvest Run at Carbonear Track and Field. The Annual Harvest Run is designed to promote an active and healthy lifestyle for all students, an idea which was generated by students and teachers. The host school was Carbonear Collegiate in participation with Davis Elementary in Carbonear. All schools in the district are given the opportunity to participate and this year, approximately 100 students from Holy Redeemer Elementary participated in the event.

Ms. Fillier's and Ms. Noseworthy's Grade 3 students participate in the annual Harvest Run, accompanied by teacher intern Ms. Slade (left) and Ms. Fillier.

Funny You Should Ask

During my second year of teaching (I was in Natuashish at the time), I was reading the novel "Call of the Wild" by Jack London with my Grade 8 students. There was some language in the book that Innu would find offensive, such as "squaw" and "Indian Village", so when reading the book I used more acceptable terms. One afternoon our Director of Education, Mrs. Cindy Fleet, and Rodger Taylor were in the school. I was talking to Cindy and Rodger and they asked me what I was doing with my class. I told them I was reading "Call of the Wild" and that it was going really well. I also stated the only problem with the book was some of the language that Jack London had used. So Cindy asked me, "Do you have whiteout?" I smiled and said, "Yes, Mrs. Fleet, we've got plenty of Liquid Paper." Cindy looked at me funny. Rodger started to laugh and said, "No Mr. Galway, she means the novel "White Out"".

Another funny incident happened two years ago in my current posting at Jens Haven Memorial in Nain. I routinely bring my students' notebooks home to correct their homework. While I was correcting one evening the phone rang, so I left this particular student's notebook on the table and went to answer the phone. While I was on the phone, Caesar (my dog), got hold of the notebook, and well, destroyed it. When I got back to the kitchen, there was Caesar, tail wagging, sitting in the scraps of what was once a notebook, full of four months worth of notes and work. It took me a few hours to rewrite all of this students' work into a new scribbler. The next day when I handed the books back the student looked in his book and recognized my handwriting. He looked at me and asked, "Sir, what happened?" I smiled and said, "Well, I never thought I'd say this as a teacher, but my dog ate your homework." Since then there's been a running joke in my classes. Every September when I tell my students that I collect their books, I remind them that "There will be no acts of Beagle."

Submitted by Michael Galway
Jens Haven Memorial, Nain, Labrador

Education Week 2008
March 2-8

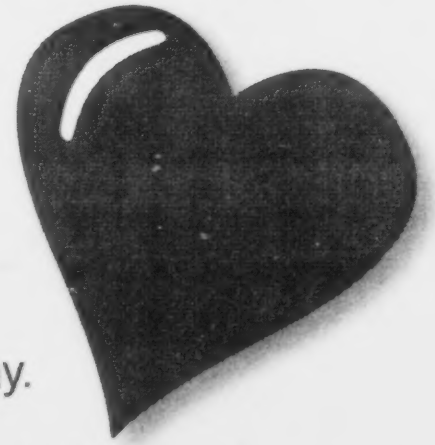
Learn... Respect... Grow

Further information and resource materials will be forwarded to schools as soon as they become available.

February 14, 2008

Janeway Day 2008

Every year, Janeway Day in the schools provides an opportunity for students and teachers to help other children. Since 1986 students and teachers have donated more than $789,000. to the Janeway.



Here's how to participate in Janeway Day 2008:

Ask students and teachers to forego the equivalent of recess monies for one day.

That's their donation to the Janeway.

All monies will be forwarded to the Janeway to help the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Caring and Sharing for the Janeway.

A project of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

CATHERINE JANE POWER (NEE WINSOR), 1958 - 2007

A teacher teaches from the heart, not from the book. These words personified Catherine Jane Power. As a teacher she received tremendous satisfaction from knowing that her students were able to achieve, to mature and to grow as human beings.

Catherine was born in St. John's on March 27, 1958. She graduated from Prince of Wales High School in St. John's and went on to Memorial University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree, majoring in biochemistry and minoring in biology, and a Bachelor of Education Degree. She also studied at Acadia University in Nova Scotia where she completed a Food Sciences Program.

Catherine began her teaching career in 1982. For the first two years she taught at Holy Trinity Regional High School in Heart's Content. From 1984 to 1992 she was a substitute teacher and replacement teacher at a variety of schools in the St. John's region, finally acquiring a full time teaching position at O'Donel High School in Mount Pearl in 1992, a position she held until 2007.

Catherine spent her entire career teaching biology, chemistry, textiles, foods, clothing and nutrition. Over the years she took great pride in imparting knowledge and values and she taught her students to discover new and exciting things. She encouraged her students to think logically and insightfully, and to always be in search of the truth whether in the classroom, the world around them, or within themselves. She did this in a humorous and exciting way. Catherine would diligently use innovative teaching techniques in order to motivate her students as she imparted her knowledge of the curriculum. Throughout her entire teaching career she was a teacher who cared and shared. She inspired her students to reach their personal best.

As a teacher, Catherine never missed an opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities, particularly at O'Donel High School where she spent most of her full-time teaching career. She especially enjoyed school musicals and various functions that involved food preparation at school. One of her greatest passions was travelling and she seized upon many opportunities to travel with groups of students to such places as France, Italy, Spain, and Morocco. On a professional level, Catherine participated in many professional development programs, conferences and courses that focused on the areas she taught.

Catherine Power

It was in September 2006 that Catherine was diagnosed with cancer and was forced to temporarily give up teaching in order to receive medical treatment. Unfortunately, she never had the opportunity to return to the classroom and continue her career as a fun-loving and wonderful teacher and colleague.

Catherine is survived by her husband David, one son Robert, her loving parents John and Sarah, her sister Beverley and her brother-in-law Ray, step-children Melanie, Gregory and Zachary, grandson Jack, and a large circle of relatives, friends and colleagues. Her infectious smile and positive outlook are sorely missed. She will be forever remembered.
(Submitted by Frank Hollohan, O'Donel High School colleague.)

In Memoriam
Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher. Information may be included on where the deceased lived and taught, their education, accomplishments, community involvement and family information.

It is preferred that all submissions be e-mailed to Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor of *The Bulletin*, at labrowne@nlta.nl.ca. If submitting by mail, please address to: Editor, *The Bulletin*, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1. Submissions may also be faxed to 726-4302 or toll-free at 1-877-711-6582. Please be sure to include a contact name, school or business name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Hurrying Through

by EDWARD HANCOCK

Everything I do, I hurry through, so I can get to something else. This quote, from the poem entitled *The Pursuit* by Stephen Dobyns, appears (somewhat appropriately) in the novel *Insomnia* by Stephen King. It speaks, of course, to the hectic, rushed pace of life that all too often is our experience in this modern world. It likely describes, perhaps all too accurately, much of your working lives as teachers. And we all know how much of that work is conducted at a hurried pace as you attempt to meet all the outcomes and carry out all the other tasks associated with teaching in the time available. And yes, there is always the "something else" that needs the teacher's attention.

Dr. David Dibbon, in his 2004 Teacher Workload Study *It's About Time!* concluded that teachers work an average of 52.32 hours per week on teaching and other school-related activities during the school year. He also wrote of the "intensification" of teachers' work over the past decade and the chronic "lack of time" to complete all the necessary tasks associated with good teaching. The report found that lack of time was a key issue for many teachers and that it greatly impacted their level of satisfaction with many other aspects of their jobs. If asked to give a one sentence summary of Dr. Dibbon's findings, one could probably do much worse than use the above quote from Stephen Dobyns.

Unfortunately, this quote also describes many aspects of our personal lives, as we try to carry out the myriad activities and tasks of living in the all too crowded day. Preparing meals, maintaining a home, getting children to and from their activities, overseeing homework, keeping fit (or trying to), engaging in community activities, and (insert your own examples here) all demand their share of the meager time available after work responsibilities are fulfilled.

As the Christmas season approaches, the "getting ready" phase can also, for many of us, perhaps be described by Dobyns' "hurrying through". We accept that life is rushed leading to Christmas. However, as we approach the first significant "break" in the school year, make it a resolution not to hurry through this season but to take time to stop and smell the poinsettias along the way. Just as time was the important issue running through Dr. Dibbon's research on teacher workload, so it is important to take time, time for yourself, when the opportunity occurs to take a break from the demands of the workplace. For the very reason that work life is hectic and does consist of a lot of "hurrying through", so it is all the more important that we make use of the Christmas season as a break from the demands of teaching; an opportunity to relax and rejuvenate ourselves while enjoying the closeness and company of family and friends. Just as you give of yourself to your students throughout the whole school year, allow yourself the gift of time to relax and enjoy the spirit of the season.

On behalf of all your staff at the NLTA who work daily on your behalf, I extend the warmest greetings and best wishes for a joyous Christmas and a very Happy New Year. May the peace and love that are the essence of the Christmas message be with you throughout the holiday season and afterwards.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ed

Christmas, children, is not a date, it is a state of mind.
(Mary Ellen Chafe)

School Rep Seminars 2007

This past October the NLTA school representative seminars were held in Gander, St. John's and Goose Bay as part of the NLTA's initiative to meet with school representatives each year. The intent is to keep school representatives informed and up to date on NLTA programs and services as well as inform new school representatives of their important role within the structure of the NLTA.

Teams of administrative staff from the NLTA planned and carried out the day and a half sessions throughout the province. The agenda items included a viewing of *The NLTA and You* video, sessions on NLTA programs and services, a group discussion on What's a School Rep to Do?, which involved a review of case studies of various situations that school representatives may have to deal with, as well as a review of several case studies for review and input. The sessions were also attended by Branch Presidents and members of the Provincial Executive.

A question and answer session was included with each session and school representatives had an opportunity to provide feedback as well as ask questions on any issue that concerned them.

Feedback from the seminars was very positive with comments such as "very informative", "well presented information", "well worth attending", and "information is invaluable for me in doing my job as school representative".

NLTA staff found the sessions to be just as rewarding as they were able meet one on one with the NLTA school representatives and provide them with essential information about the NLTA.

The province has been divided into nine regions and three seminars will be held each fall so that schools will be provided the opportunity to have a representative attend a seminar every three years. The next series of seminars will be held in the fall of 2008. A notification of dates and locations will be announced as soon as they become available.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How can/should teachers deal with conflict/tensions between colleagues?

A. Respectful, constructive relationships among teachers are important in our profession. The NLTA Code of Ethics outlines principles for appropriate professional conduct between teachers and the public (pupils and parents), teachers and school boards, teachers and colleagues, and teachers and their professional organization. But, positive relationships can break down and conflict may be the result. The NLTA provides assistance for teachers dealing with member-to-member conflict; however, too often it seems that the call for help comes long after the problem first surfaced. Too often, neither party is speaking to the other by the time they call. The information that follows outlines advice for teachers on how to respond to and how to access assistance in relation to conflict with a colleague.

When conflict occurs, it is always advisable to approach the other party first in an attempt to resolve the issue or concern between colleagues. This is consistent with generally accepted standards of professional behavior and the Code of Ethics (Teacher-Colleagues section (ii)). The first option is to handle the issue through discussion or problem solving/negotiation with the other person. In reality, however, this sometimes doesn't happen due to concerns for safety, repercussion, avoidance or a hope that the conflict will just "go away". When it is improbable or impossible for issues to be resolved through direct discussion between members, teachers may consider requesting assistance from a third party. Depending on the willingness of the parties and the nature of the conflict, a meeting involving another staff member or a colleague from another school to bring a fresh, objective perspective to the matter may be helpful.

Alternatively, teachers dealing with conflict may request third-party assistance from the NLTA. Association policy provides that, once local efforts to settle a dispute have been exhausted, "a teacher may seek the assistance of the NLTA to resolve the issue by contacting an administrative officer of the NLTA" (NLTA Policy OP51.N.). Administrative officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division have training and experience in conflict resolution. This assistance is provided at no cost to members and is completely confidential between the parties to the dispute and the administrative officer working with them. This assistance can take many forms, from providing general advice on possible resolutions to personally facilitating meetings between members to help them find an acceptable solution to their conflict.

"Conflict is not always negative and, when effectively managed and resolved, can often lead to positive developments and outcomes, such as gaining a new perspective on an issue or initiating important changes to policies or procedures."

Unfortunately, member-to-member conflict sometimes relates to a breach of the NLTA Code of Ethics, in particular, Teacher-Colleagues section (ii), which states: *A teacher does not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague, except to proper officials and then only in confidence and after the colleague has been informed of the criticism.*

When teachers have a complaint or concern about another member of the NLTA, the Code requires that they inform their colleague of the issue before taking the matter to higher authority through any of the options described below. This ensures the other member is aware of and has an opportunity to respond to the issue before further action is taken. (Note: Contacting the NLTA to discuss an issue in confidence or seek advice on how to deal with a conflict would not constitute a complaint to proper

officials or report to "higher authority.")

When a member believes that a breach of the Code has occurred, and other efforts to address this issue have not been successful, he/she may file a formal complaint pursuant to the disciplinary procedures set out in the Teachers' Association Act and the NLTA by-laws and policy. Disciplinary complaints may proceed to a hearing before the NLTA Disciplinary Committee, which is made up of trained members of the NLTA appointed by the Provincial Executive Council.

Depending on the nature of the conflict and the specific circumstances of the case, additional options may be to file a harassment complaint with the school board against the other member or to file a grievance against the employer for failing to maintain a workplace free from discrimination and intimidation. Details of the processes for doing so are contained in the NLTA Collective Agreement and school board policy. Information and advice regarding these options are available from administrative officers in the NLTA Benefits and Economic Services Division. Also, in some cases, support and assistance from the Employee Assistance Program may be helpful to teachers in dealing with and resolving conflict with a colleague.

Everyone deals with conflict in their professional and personal lives from time to time. Conflict is not always negative and, when effectively managed and resolved, can often lead to positive developments and outcomes, such as gaining a new perspective on an issue or initiating important changes to policies or procedures. The options and assistance outlined above are available conflict resolution services supported by the NLTA. Through these options, NLTA members have access to information, advice, support and due process procedures when dealing with the challenges of conflict between colleagues.

Q. What are the risks and liability issues for teachers who administer medication to students?

A. We all know of children in our school system who receive some level of medical care at school. At the school level, principals are responsible for organizing the teaching and support staff in a manner which ensures that medical care is available in circumstances where: a student requires it in order to attend school; or, in an emergency situation (such as life-threatening allergic reactions). When teachers are involved in providing medical care, they, and ultimately the school board, are potentially liable should any harm result from their actions. Therefore, the administration of medication by teachers should only take place when doing so is absolutely necessary for either of the reasons stated above, and not merely for reasons of convenience.

"Teachers should not, under any circumstances, undertake to administer medication or medical care to students unless they are satisfied that they have the training, information and support necessary to do so properly and safely."

It is impossible to address every potential situation in which a teacher might be asked to administer medication or provide medical care. A situation specific assessment of risks and legal liability can only be done on a case by case basis and, ultimately, it is the school board's responsibility to ensure that staffing levels, resources and employee training in its schools meet the appropriate standard of care in the circumstances. School boards are required by the *Schools Act, 1997* to have liability insurance in place to cover claims for damages or personal injury and, generally speaking, this coverage would apply to the actions of any employee carried out in good faith and in the course of employment, including the administration of medication. Also, the *Emergency Medical Aid Act* provides protection from liability for individuals who voluntarily provide emergency first aid assistance at the immediate scene of an accident or emergency.

School boards are contractually required to have policies in place that establish procedures and standards for the administration of medication and health support for students. To protect students, teachers and others, these policies should include the following conditions:

- Medications should be stored in secure, labeled, original containers that are kept in a restricted access location;
- Medications should be accompanied by clear, original directions from a medical provider on how they are to be used;
- There should be a simple and clear system for logging the details of medications and medical care provided by school personnel;
- Schools in which students receive or administer their own medical care should be equipped with any necessary safety equipment (i.e. a proper Sharps disposal unit for needles used by diabetics).

Teachers (and other staff) who administer medication and/or medical care to students on a regular basis or who may be required to respond in an emergency situation should be provided with appropriate information, training and equipment to enable them to carry out such duties safely. Such training should be made available during regular school hours. School response plans and staffing should be adequate to ensure that the administration of medication and other procedures can be properly carried out while still maintaining adequate supervision for the rest of the students. Teachers generally work with groups of students and should not be expected to abandon the class in order to focus on administering medication/medical care safely to an individual student.

The view of the NLTA is that teachers are educators, not health care providers (see Infosheet #23 in the Publications section of the NLTA website). Teachers should not, under any circumstances, undertake to administer medication or medical care to students unless they are satisfied that they have the training, information and support necessary to do so properly and safely. As a result, teachers should protest any directive or plan that requires them to put themselves or others at risk. This should be communicated in writing, should clearly describe the educational and safety concerns involved in the specific situation, and should include a statement to the effect that the teacher will not accept liability for unsafe conditions resulting from the directives or decisions of others. Teachers who need help in drafting such a document should contact the NLTA.

The advice in these articles is general in nature and is intended to provide some overall guidance and information for NLTA members. Teachers who need advice or assistance in dealing with a specific situation should contact the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

This information has been prepared by Stefanie Tuff. For information on these topics or other areas of Benefits and Economic Services, please contact any of the following: Lloyd Hobbs, ext. 230, Don Ash, ext. 231, Perry Downey, ext. 226 or Stefanie Tuff, ext. 232.

Pension Income Splitting May Mean Significant Tax Savings for Retired Teachers

by Don Ash

If you, as a retired teacher in receipt of pension, have a spouse/partner who has no pension, a small pension, or a pension less than your own, then it is quite likely you may be entitled to a significant tax refund if you elect to exercise pension income splitting when you complete your 2007 tax return. However, it is very important to discuss all implications with a certified financial planner or tax expert prior to making this election.

Federal legislation was passed in June of 2007 to allow people in receipt of pension from a defined pension plan, such as the Teachers' Pension Plan, to elect to split up to 50 percent of their pension income for tax purposes with their spouse/partner. The incentive for a retired person to pension income split would be to lower the overall tax paid by the family. For example, tax paid by one person declaring $40,000 in income is greater than the total tax paid by two people in a family declaring $20,000 each.

The process does not involve any change in payment of pension to a retired person. No money actually transfers between the spouses, but by signing a form along with each partner's tax return, as much as half of the pension income can be taxed on each partner's return. In addition, both spouses are considered to be a "recipient" of pension income eligible for the $2,000 pension income tax credit.

It is also important to note that income from defined contribution plans, group RRSPs, or self contributed RRSPs are excluded from pension income splitting until age 65. However, after age 65, income can include these types of RRSPs in pension income splitting (Canada Pension Plan income can already be split, although this mechanism is through Canada Pension Plan or Service Canada).

In summary, there is potential for significant overall tax savings to a family as a result of this legislation, depending on individual circumstances.

The purpose of this article is not to provide individual advice but to bring this legislative change to your attention and suggest you investigate whether pension income splitting is appropriate for you. It is our understanding that further details will be provided in the 2007 income tax return and package provided by Canada Revenue Agency. Tax specialists and financial planners should be consulted to assist with your individual personal circumstances.

Recent Pension Amendments

The Teachers' Pension Plan is covered by a legislative Act covering the Teachers' Pension Plan (TPP). Any changes to the plan are made through amendments to the Act through the House of Assembly. The purpose of this article is to highlight amendments in the spring of 2007 to the Teachers' Pension Plan. These amendments were made in consultation with the NLTA.

Effective May 2007, all references to mandatory retirement at age 60 were removed from the Teachers' Pension Plan. Prior to this amendment, teachers who wished to teach beyond age 60 were required to provide proof of good health and obtain individual approval from the Minister of Finance. No such proof or approval is now required. Also included was an amendment to allow teachers who continue working past age 60 to accrue pension beyond age 60. This is extremely positive especially for those teachers who have entered the profession late and have low pension accrual by age 60.

The section on Re-employment After Normal Retirement Age was amended and the amendment included deleting the maximum 65-day limit that a retired teacher was allowed to substitute in a school year. The result is that there is now no limit on the number of days a retired teacher can substitute. The exception is that a retired teacher cannot teach more than 19 consecutive days (without approval of the Minister).

A number of administrative amendments were also made to bring the TPP in line with the Income Tax Act, and do not effect any practical change to an individual teacher's pension. However, the NLTA does monitor such administrative changes.

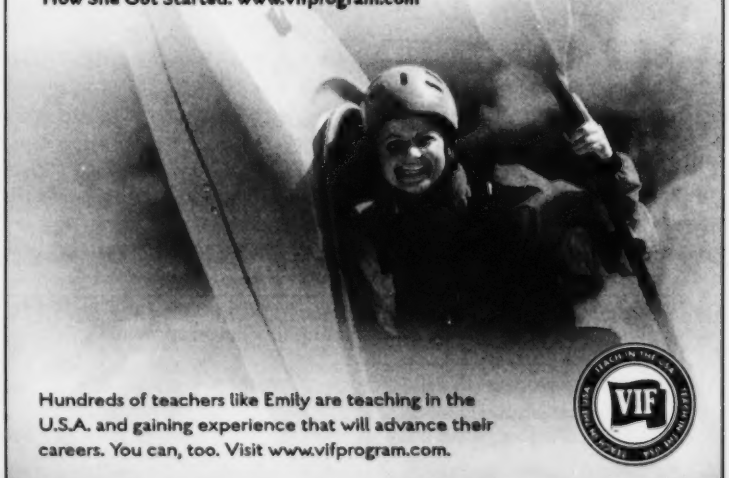
In the winter of 2006, the Newfoundland and Labrador TPP began participating in a multilateral reciprocal pension transfer agreement which allows the transfer of pension service among teacher pension plans in every province in Canada. While participation in this agreement did not require a legislative amendment, it is important to note this change, which allows for increased pension mobility across Canada.

The NLTA continues through the Pensions Administration Committee to discuss and monitor any potential amendments or changes to the pension plan. Article 27 of the Provincial Collective Agreement requires the NLTA's consent prior to any changes in pension benefit or pension premium.

Don Ash is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Work as a teacher in the U.S.A.

Teacher: Emily
Home Country: Canada
U.S.A. Placement: Virginia
Professional Goal: Complete my master's degree
Personal Goal: Learn to kayak
How She Got Started: www.vifprogram.com



Hundreds of teachers like Emily are teaching in the U.S.A. and gaining experience that will advance their careers. You can, too. Visit www.vifprogram.com.

VIF

School Closure and Salary

When are Substitute Teachers Entitled to be Paid?

by PERRY DOWNEY

Clause 49.04 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Clause 49.04 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) states: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where: (a) the school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997; or (b) previously contracted substitute services are not required for any other reason(s) and the substitute teacher is not notified prior to reporting for duty at the school that his or her services are not required.*

Q. If a substitute teacher is contracted to work at a school on a particular day or for a particular contract period and that school is subsequently closed due to inclement weather, lack of heating, or other similar causes, is the substitute teacher entitled to be paid for the day or days? (Refer to Clause 49.04(a) – Provincial Collective Agreement: Clause 46.04(a) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.

A. Yes. Section 32 of the *Schools Act, 1997* states that "a teacher in a school shall, for the purpose of determining payment of salary, be considered to have taught on a day or part of it when school" is:
(a) closed "because of inclement weather...";
(b) closed "by order of the minister responsible for health...";
(c) closed "by the board...";
(d) "declared uninhabitable by the board because of fire, storm, failure of the sewage system or other cause of a similar nature";
(e) closed "because the teacher was unavoidably prevented by opening the school because of delay in construction..., remodeling or renovations... and the minister is satisfied that no alternative accommodation was available";
(f) closed "because of a lack of heating or for other reason, where, in the opinion of the minister, the closing of the school could not have been avoided by the teacher"; or
(g) "the teacher is required to act as a member of a board of arbitration established in accordance with the collective agreement as defined in the Teachers' Collective Bargaining Act...".

Q. Is a substitute teacher still entitled to receive pay if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act and the teacher is notified prior to arriving at the school?

A. Yes. Substitute teachers, once contracted to work, are entitled to receive pay for any day or part thereof, *if school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Act*, regardless of whether they are contacted prior to arriving at the school. For example, if a substitute teacher is contracted a week in advance to substitute for a teacher who is going to be absent and on the day in question, the school is notified that there is going to be a scheduled power outage forcing the school to close, the substitute teacher will still be entitled to be paid, regardless if the substitute is contacted by the school and informed that the school will be closed. The substitute is deemed to have kept school on that day for the purpose of determining salary.

Q. Would a substitute teacher be entitled to receive pay if previous contracted service is cancelled for any other reason other than those listed in Section 32 of the Act and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school? (Refer to Clause 49.04(b) – Provincial Collective Agreement and Clause 46:04 (b) – Labrador West Collective Agreement.)

A. No. If school remains open and the services of the substitute teacher are no longer required and the substitute teacher is notified prior to reporting for duty at the school, the substitute teacher is deemed *not* to have kept school on that day and thus would *not* be entitled to be paid. Scenario: A substitute teacher is contracted to work for a teacher who is scheduled to attend a professional development workshop. The day prior to the workshop, the workshop is cancelled and the regular teacher is scheduled to return to work. As long as the substitute teacher is contacted "prior to reporting for duty at the school" he/she would *not* be entitled to pay. However, if the substitute is not notified prior to reporting for duty, then they are entitled to receive pay for the day in question.

Additional information on these issues can be found in the NLTA Infosheet "Substitute Teacher Member and Benefits" at www.nlta.nl.ca. Inquiries on this matter should be directed to the BES Division.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

This Christmas, Create a Healthy Home!

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

When it comes down to what really matters in life… where do your thoughts wander? Every decision has consequences. Every action requires a choice.

If we really want to know our values, we need to monitor where we spend our resources. Are they balanced the way we want them to be? Although *energy* and *finances* are two critical personal resources, they may not reflect our ultimate values. Usually, with a little rest and self-care we can renew our energy level. Likewise, with some planning, budgeting and if necessary some professional assistance and attitude adjustments, we can get our financial lives in order. However, *time* is a non-renewable resource that we continuously trade off for other important things in our lives.

We can use our energy now, or conserve it for planned activity later. If we use our energy on daily demands, exercise or partying, we can put things on hold by taking a rest or break until we rebuild our supply for the next adventure. We can also save or spend and plan or be spontaneous with our finances. If we make mistakes or use poor judgement, we still have the option of working toward rebuilding our financial security.

We don't have the same liberties with our time. If we spend our time wisely, foolishly, or regrettably – it is still spent! We don't have a second chance with that trade. However, as long as we are alive and aware, we have a choice about how we spend this time.

Personal Assessment

To start off making the best trade in return for our time we must assess where we are, what we want and where we want to be in the future. Although we cannot guarantee the future, if we live into it without planning for it, we end up wasting opportunities and living with unnecessary regrets.

Just for a moment, think about school Placement Tests. They serve a definite purpose. They set a baseline, avoid unnecessary review, provide a foundation for measuring progress and give tools for directing action. That's enough thought of school and work for now, we are into the holiday season! Now back to the other important parts of life. What does your personal Placement Assessment show? What are the goals from your heart? Are you making plans to achieve those goals? Are you taking steps daily in the right direction? Remember, activity doesn't equal achievement. To make progress, we must focus activity in the direction of our goals.

Career

Certainly our careers have taken up much of our mental and physical energy from our early days of planning to be a teacher, through our university years of studying and into our years of dedicated teaching. Usually, we have those plans well under control. It may take awhile to reach them but we generally know what we want … complete a Masters Degree, follow an administrative path, excel in our field, or positively influence lives on our way to retirement. Whatever we decide, we have the tools and knowledge to get there. Unfortunately, we are often less clear about our personal lives.

Personal

At this time of year there is greater demand on our social lives and more focus on our family connections. During the summer we tend to think of vacations and rejuvenation. At Christmas time we tend to think of connecting with family.

For many, Christmas time presents a different set of challenges. For people who are not single by preference, this time of year highlights loss, loneliness and the absence of a significant personal relationship. In dealing with loss, there are things to do which can change our feelings and experience of being alone. We can assess our current status and our potential for change. We can identify the components of loss which have the greatest impact on our sense of well-

being and fulfillment. If we temporarily suspended our emotional involvement and considered the situation the way we would a research assignment, it wouldn't take long to come up with positive options!

For others, Christmas time represents a high energy, frantic response to meeting the needs or wishes of others while leaving you exhausted and feeling that the joy of the season has bypassed you. That suggests that it is time to do things a little differently.

The strategy is to increase supports and decrease stress. By bringing others into the picture and by relinquishing some of the responsibilities and delegating tasks, the workload can be lessened, the demands made more reasonable and the pleasures multiplied.

Creating Change

According to Buddah, "We are what we think. All that we are arises from our thoughts." That suggests that if we don't like where we are, change begins with our thoughts. If we think "worry, anger, sadness, distress", then we become that. Thoughts become chemical messengers within our bodies. These negative toxins accumulate and determine our state of physical and emotional well-being. Alternatively, we can plan a happy, healthy holiday by making the magic happen. By adjusting our attitudes and predetermining our actions we set a direction which leads to a positive holiday season. We can create a healthy home within ourselves!

We use special dates, seasons or set times of the year to serve as reminders to engage in specific behaviours or to motivate us. Although we accept one date to generate a focus, usually on reflection, celebration or change, it does not exempt us from maintaining focus or action during the remainder of the year. During Remembrance Day we reflect on the sacrifices of soldiers. Our gratitude is no less genuine because we focus our actions on one day. We use birth and wedding anniversaries to remind us of personal choices and the positives in life. Smokers often use select dates such as: World No-Tobacco Day, National Non-Smoking Week or Weedless Wednesday to quit smoking. As all smokers know, this isn't a one-time effort! Likewise, Canada's Fitweek is designed to 'kick-start' our fitness routine and encourage us to be more active every day.

In line with Christian heritage, we see Christmas as the season of hope and joy. We express that by sharing, helping others and receiving help. This makes Christmas an ideal time, or if we prefer, we can use "New Year's Resolutions" to jump-start our change of heart and mind. We can avail of all opportunities to grow personally and experience the real value of living. In the quiet glow of the Christmas tree lights, take time to reflect on the important things in life and where you spend your resources of time and energy. In that moment of personal assessment, acknowledge the challenges but also identify the areas of life that interfere with the health of your home.

We can be thankful for life's challenges because they offer us the opportunity and motivation to improve our lives and to focus on what is most important to us, thereby encouraging us to plot our desired direction. Generally it can be helpful to accept that view of challenge, but for this season, take the time that belongs to you and those you cherish. Put thoughts of workplace-associated stressors aside. Recognize that what you are trading for your time this season should be worth what you are giving up!

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

It's the Teacher in Me…

by BEVERLEY PARK

Recently I was at a session where the speaker made reference to another person he had heard justify a lengthy rambling talk to an audience by saying "Sorry if I went on a bit, but it's the teacher in me." If this behaviour did indeed represent the teacher he was, then it's a good thing he's retired. Rare (if any) are those teachers who are so gifted at story telling or lecturing that they can get away with that method as their sole instructional strategy. My own brother (also my high school History teacher) is and was a masterful storyteller. The subject matter lent itself to that technique and I think most of the students in his class, myself included, thought he was a great teacher. Good as he was at talking while we sat back and listened, that was just one of many ways that he engaged us. Often the story was just a lead in to something else – a thought-provoking question, a discussion, a debate or other some other activity.

And while some would suggest that "one time" you could actually get away with being a one-trick-pony kind of teacher, today's students, surrounded by their multi-stimulus environment, demand more. I would argue that this didactic approach, by itself, was never ever good teaching, not then, not now. Instead of looking at the teacher, let's look at it from the learner's point of view.

Learners learn today in the same way as learners learned when I was in that Grade 10 class. While advances in neuroscience are constantly revising and adding to the depth of our knowledge about how we learn, it is definitive about some things: for real learning to happen we must be in learning mode – not in survival mode; we must in some way connect with the content; learning is a social activity. The difference between then and now is not in the way students learned, it was in how students were expected to respond to the teacher as an authority figure. Students a few decades ago were expected to be compliant and blindly obedient. That compliance was dictated by what was or was not socially acceptable at that time. Those of us who are of a certain vintage have all heard stories or have our own stories about being chastised at school, and then coming home to another reprimand. Looking back I know that compliance and obedience are sometimes the enemy of creativity and diversity. While I dare not question the quality of the teaching, I am left wondering about the quality of the learning.

On those rough days when we struggle, some teachers might even long to go back to that time. In this as in many things, memory is often an enhanced version of reality. The good old days weren't really all that good. Society has progressed and, thankfully, everyone, including our students, has come to expect and to enjoy a greater degree of freedom. Just as we do, they want choice and autonomy. They want and need to belong and, just like us, they want to enjoy life – not just after the bell rings. When we plan lessons that are engaging and which hook students with relevance or meaning or curiosity, then we don't need to concern ourselves with compliance.

In working with beginning teachers I am always inspired by their energy and that sparkle which comes from a naiveté, a kind of innocence which can never be regained after the first year or two. I am likewise impressed that they seem to have figured out that teaching isn't all about the curriculum and the tests. I am awestruck by the lengths they will go to build relationships, to connect with their students, to find interests with which to link curriculum concepts.

"Who" and "What" an effective teacher is has evolved. If I were to ask my mother to close her eyes and picture an image of "teacher", it would, I imagine, be something evocative of her experience in the 1930s. I suspect it might be the teacher at the podium in front of the class. I hope that image would be different today. What image of yourself do you have when you say, "It's the teacher in me."?

Beginning teachers are at that wonderful, if fragile, place where they are creating their professional identity. In thirty years time, I wonder what will cause them to say, "Oh! Don't mind that…it's just the teacher in me!"

Beverley Park is Senior Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Special Interest Councils Host Successful Conferences

On September 28 and 29, the NLTA Professional Development Division conducted an SIC Leadership Meeting at the Capital Hotel in St. John's. One of the goals of this meeting was to be a collective sharing of experiences – a review of the successes and challenges being faced by our Councils.

The meeting was attended by members of the following councils: Primary/Elementary, Intermediate, Senior High, Modern Languages, Music, NL Counsellors' and Psychologists, Physical Education, School Administrators, Special Services and Technology Education.

SIC Executive members planning for the future.

The President of the NLTA, Sean Noah, brought greetings at the meeting and highlighted the significance of the professional development arm of the Association and the importance of the leadership being shown by those involved in executive positions with the SIC structure. He also highlighted some of the positive changes affecting councils, in particular their enhanced role at BGM, whereby they now have full voting rights.

Day two of the meeting included a sharing session by the various councils which provided them an opportunity to get a better understanding of the kinds of activities that each council is engaged in. A discussion was also held on the future direction of our councils.

Activity among those councils that retained their council status following the SIC restructuring has been strong. The following summarizes four of the professional development conferences/opportunities offered by SIC councils this fall.

Physical Education SIC

"What fits your schedule better – to exercise for a little while each day, or to be dead all day?" With astute comments such as these, backed up by descriptive data, the keynote speaker, Glen Young, reminded the physical educators that they, along with society in general, are mired in a health challenge. The context was the provincial conference of physical education teachers taking place at Memorial University in St. John's on September 13-15, 2007. The Physical Education Special Interest Council (PESIC) President, Dave Constantine, addressed the record number of participants and suggested that our inspiration could come from the recently departed Dr. Douglas Eaton, former Dean of Physical Education (MUN), to help "solve it."

Physical educators practicing their craft at the PESIC Conference.

cont'd

MUN researcher, Dr. Anthony Card, reported what physical educators already know: "Students are not getting the physical education time that they need" and "the Department of Education's recommended six percent allocation of the instructional day for physical education is the second lowest in Canada."

Despite the obstacles, physical educators who attended the PESIC Conference recommitted themselves to enhance the teaching and learning environment in our schools. At the AGM, the President of the NLTA, Sean Noah, was formally presented with a written description of the issues that are barriers and the recommended solutions by PESIC. Dr. Marian Fushell and Eldred Barnes from the Department of Education attended the conference luncheon and PESIC acknowledged the work the Department has done in the way of new curriculum and improved equipment resources. There are some steps being made in the right direction; this gives room for optimism, though it may be measured optimism due to the many obstacles still in place.

Modern Languages Council

In partnership with the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, the Department of Education and the NLTA, the Modern Languages Council (MLC) was successful in hosting a one day professional development session for approximately 100 French second language teachers on September 21 in St. John's with Dr. Miles Turnbull, or "Miles" as he is known to all.

"Miles, the teacher, the researcher, and Miles the administrator" with his warm personality and humor enticed his audience of second language teachers with his vast expertise and knowledge. Dr. Turnbull is Associate Professor at the University of PEI, CASLT President, current Virtual Scholar for the Department of Canadian Heritage, and former high school FSL teacher.

The morning session focused on "Literacy and grammar in the FSL classroom" and the challenges related to teaching "grammar in context". In the afternoon, Dr. Turnbull explored current research pertaining to "Boys in FSL" as the retention of males in French second language programs is a trend throughout our province and country.

Overall, the day was a success and MLC wishes to offer future sessions where well known researchers or educators may come to our province to share with our FSL teachers. Many thanks to the partners who made this event one to repeat. MLC would like to offer a special "Merci" to the NLTA for their continuous support.

Dr. Miles Turnbull presents to French second language teachers.

Technology Educators SIC

The Biennual General Meeting and Technology Conference of the NLTA Technology Educators Special Interest Council (TESIC) was held October 18 and 19 at the Battery Hotel and Suites in St. John's. The keynote address by Mr. Jon Eakes, best known for his HGTV television show *Just Ask Jon Eakes* took place on October 18. Eakes keynote address and plenary session promoted education in the skilled trades and actively promoted student involvement in careers related to the trades. The keynote session was open to the public and was very well attended.

Keynote presenter Jon Eakes promotes education in the skilled trades at the TESIC Conference.

On day two of the conference TESIC offered an eclectic mix of sessions that interested educators who have an interest in technology and technology integration.

"Technology education, particularly in the area of skilled trades, has become a critical focal point in

schools and industry," stated Eric Nippard, President of the TESIC. "We live in an increasingly complex world where technology skills are of considerable importance. Educators that assist students in understanding and acquiring those skills require relevant and up to date professional development. The TESIC serves that purpose by providing the opportunity and expertise for deep learning."

TESIC is one of the professional development arms of the NLTA that provides professional development specifically for the Technology Educators in the province's teaching population.

NL Counsellors' & Psychologists Association SIC

The NLTA's Counsellors' and Psychologists Association (NLCPA) Special Interest Council held its 2007 Conference and Annual General Meeting on October 24-26 at the Battery Hotel and Suites in St. John's.

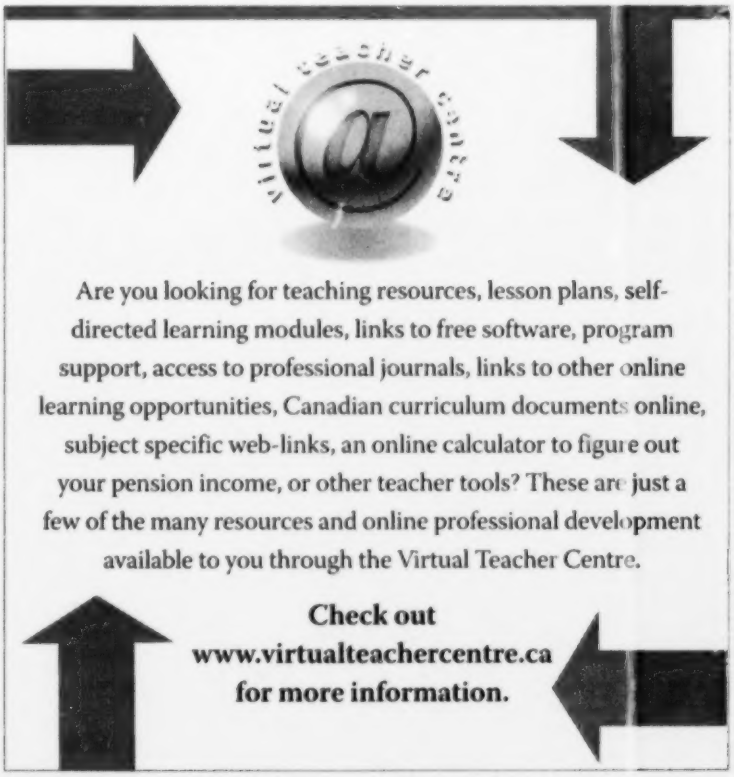
The theme for the conference and AGM was *Building Respectful Workplaces and Learning Environments* and one of the highlights was a public session on Wednesday evening, October 24 with Hetty van Gurp, the internationally recognized educator and author. Ms. Gurp also presented on Thursday morning to delegates on *Respectful Schools: A Responsibility – Not an Option!*.

Other highlights included a workshop with Sally Wells DiCarlo called *The Respectful Workplace* and a session with Gerry Dooley called *Self-Mutilation* which was a full day certificate program. Other sessions at the conference included Cyber-bullying; Supporting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Youth; Experiences of Children and Teens in Residential Settings; Introduction to Hypnosis; Early Psychosis Program; and Services of the Child and Youth Advocate's Office.

Pictured l-r: George Tucker, NLTA Administrative Officer; Hetty van Gurp, NLCPA Conference Presenter; and Trent Langdon, NLCPA President.

"The theme this year stressed the importance of providing a respectful workplace to all employees and finding the balance in a positive and professional way," said Trent Langdon, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists Association. "Our Annual Conference and AGM was also a great opportunity for networking and professional development."

The aim of the NLCPA is to further the professional growth of Counsellors' and Psychologists and to provide a voice in matters relating to training, certification, promotion of high standards of professional competency, and the improvement of counselling and psychological services to all stakeholders within the Newfoundland and Labrador public K-12 school system.



Are you looking for teaching resources, lesson plans, self-directed learning modules, links to free software, program support, access to professional journals, links to other online learning opportunities, Canadian curriculum documents online, subject specific web-links, an online calculator to figure out your pension income, or other teacher tools? These are just a few of the many resources and online professional development available to you through the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Check out www.virtualteachercentre.ca for more information.

Going Global: A Long Walk to School

by IAN DAVIDSON

As our world increasingly embraces the concept of becoming a "global village", it is becoming more necessary for our schools to embrace their international cousins and become familiar with their cultures. A growing realization that countries need to work together to face future challenges, such as global warming and international trade, is contributing to a growing demand for enhanced international development awareness among our students. This belief is supported by University of British Columbia (UBC) president Martha Piper in her opening remarks to participants of the Global Citizenship Conference when she states: "Our goal must be to educate global citizens who see themselves not simply as citizens of a local region, but also as human beings bound to other human beings in ties of concern and understanding." The international dimension of education offers a necessary element in developing students as active inhabitants of a multi-cultural society and a rapidly changing world. Schools that do not promote intercultural awareness are allowing students to remain in a virtual bubble, essentially unaware of their place in the larger world. If we are to truly prepare our students for future success, we must strive to increase our focus on international education in schools.

Rationale for Participation

As the world responds to interconnected systems of communication and trade, our students will be required to become global citizens and the future job market in which they compete will become an increasingly international one. Through increased communication via the Internet, world travel and interaction with growing numbers of international students attending our schools, educators have an unprecedented opportunity to provide students with knowledge and experience of world affairs allowing them to effectively work with people from different cultures. Developing global leaders and advancing the interests of our country abroad are also strong reasons for increasing our focus on international education in schools. The global reputation of Canada as a country is impeccable and developing nations around the world will need our citizens to assist with their efforts to grow as countries. To this end, the current generation of students will find themselves in many life situations where their abilities and education will be needed to bring about positive change in the world. I believe that international education in schools has never been more important.

Getting Your School Involved

What should we be doing in our schools to teach children to cope in this rapidly changing world and what educational experiences should schools develop for children so they will be responsible global citizens in the coming years? Interested schools have many options to choose from when they decide to introduce their students to the world. Hosting an international student in your school is a wonderful way to get involved. Within my school district, we have the Newfoundland International Schools Educational Program (NISEP) that gives students from different countries around the world the option to come and study in our district. These students pay an annual tuition fee in exchange for the opportunity to live with host families and attend regular classes in our schools.

"School Twinning" is a process where schools can partner (twin) with other schools allowing for an easy exchange of ideas and information. Students and staff can exchange experiences and cultural details giving each other a more intense understanding of the needs and interests of others as well as a wider perception on global views. In school twin relationships students can conduct "Pen-pal" exchanges, share web space for posting collaborative projects and eventually participate in a school exchange where students visit each other in their home countries. At Clarenville High, we have three twin relationships in place with schools from Bermuda, Australia and Italy. Organizing these partnerships has been professionally thrilling and the benefits to the students and school are already evident. The involved students are eager to make contact and display a greater understanding of the lives of our twins in each diverse country with which we work.

International Teacher Exchanges

One of the most positive experiences of my teaching career was a year spent teaching in Gwangju, South Korea. In addition to experiencing the personal growth that comes from coping with a language barrier, I also had to deal with educating children who were growing up in a society with views very different from my own. I soon realized that adjusting my teaching philosophy to mesh with the needs and expectations of my Asian students was a necessary point of departure if I was going to make a lasting difference in their lives. I gladly made the needed adjustment to my paradigms and became a more flexible and stronger teacher as a result. To this end, I believe school administrators should encourage their faculty to spend time teaching abroad and provide relevant professional development activities designed to highlight the benefits potentially gained from an international teaching experience. Teachers who complete an international teaching post should return to their schools as more tolerant, culturally sensitive and interesting individuals. The experiences they have while teaching abroad can energize their teaching and make the entire school a more internationally friendly place for students, parents and fellow educators.

As the late Robert Sills (2004) eloquently stated in his Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE) distinguished lecturer address: "As school leaders…we have an opportunity, indeed an obligation, to affect the future by teaching and reinforcing tolerance and understanding." Rubenstein in *World Party: A Seattle School Excites Students with the Promise of an Interconnected World* also highlights the need for educators to recognize and understand that whatever livelihoods our students choose, they will need to work with people from different countries, in different languages, in the realms of business, politics, and human understanding. They will need to forge relationships and solve problems across borders of race, culture and geography. If we strive to develop active, compassionate life-long learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right, we will have a much better future. In the end, we plan to purposefully and consciously shape the school culture of Clarenville High to provide students with the competencies they are going to need to manoeuvre the complexities of the world they will inherit. And, along the way, we hope to hit a few beaches!

Ian Davidson is Vice-Principal of Clarenville High School.

The Right Stuff!

by GEORGE TUCKER

Lunch atop a Skyscraper (New York Construction Workers Lunching on a Crossbeam) is a famous photograph taken by Charles C. Ebbets during construction of the GE Building at Rockefeller Center in 1932. The photograph depicts eleven men eating lunch, seated on a girder with their feet dangling hundreds of feet above the New York City streets. Ebbets took the photograph on September 29th, 1932, and it appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* in its Sunday photo supplement on October 2.

I love Ebbets' photograph because it is a vivid image of the intrinsic qualities of a very special group of individuals. Rumour has it that some of the famous eleven iron workers were of Newfoundland stock. Given that many Newfoundlanders left their island home to pursue work in the so-called Boston States, and given that Newfoundlanders were renowned for their ability to work high steel, there is likely to be validity to the rumour. And, even if there were no Newfoundlanders present on that particular day when Ebbets snapped his famous photograph, it is conceivable that our brave, sure-footed ancestors were eating their lunch on other steel girders on similar skyscrapers in cities such as New York and Boston.

It is said that a photograph is worth a thousand words. To the casual viewer of Ebbets' photo, some words might be… unbelievable, wow, spectacular, stunning, impressive, amazing, fantastic, dramatic, marvelous, incredible, breathtaking, etc. To me, however, Ebbets was able to capture on film the true character of the men that he wanted to portray in their work environment hundreds of feet above the streets of New York City. The iron workers who will live forevermore due to Ebbets' photo, display qualities like commitment, courage, confidence, skill, vision, balance, teamwork, risk-taking, trust, etc. To coin a modern phrase, they had "The right stuff!" To us mere earth-bound mortals, we find it hard to comprehend how iron workers could sit casually on a narrow girder hundreds of feet above the ground where a careless move or miscalculation would result in inevitably death. To the iron workers of the era being portrayed, however, their environment was as innate and comfortable as the sailor/fisherperson on the deck of a wave-tossed ship or the miner in the iron ore pits a mile or so underground.

As I travel the province doing professional development sessions or attending meetings, I am privileged to interact with and observe teachers and administrators practice their craft. I am in awe of the commitment, courage, confidence, skill, vision, balance, teamwork, risk-taking, trust, etc. that is displayed by my educator colleagues. Yes, these are indeed the same qualities that are exhibited by the iron workers in Ebbets' famous 1932 photograph. Certainly an informed person would agree that educating the children and youth of this province is challenging. Unlike steel girders, children and their parents are all different. The pieces required for the successful completion of the task at hand, namely an educated child or youth, are not always known or do not always fall into place. Unlike constructing a skyscraper, the blueprint for developing a child is tenuous at best. Creating a building requires science. Creating an educated young person is anything but a science.

No one would argue that successful educators must have all the qualities that I have identified, and indeed, many others as well such as compassion, creativity, humour, patience, honour, etc. And, during a career in education of some 28 years and my present role at the NLTA where I get to engage with educators throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, I am comfortable saying publicly that our teachers and administrators do have "The right stuff!" And, if our iron worker ancestors were to drop into classrooms around this province, I suspect they would be in awe of the success that you, the teachers and administrators of the NLTA, have creating works of art, not science, in spite of very challenging circumstances. I hope that you'll hang the Ebbets' photo somewhere in your classroom so that you may be able to look at it from time-to-time when you may need a little inspiration or encouragement. Hopefully it will remind you that you are very special, with innumerable qualities and skills that are being used every day to create works that engender awe and appreciation for all who take the time to truly look.

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Home-School Collaboration: A Vital Interface

by DAVID PHILPOTT & WAYNE NESBIT

Trying to educate the young child without help and support from the home is akin to trying to rake leaves in a high wind. (Gough, 1991)

There is a new face to education – one which focuses upon collaboration and teamwork. Gone are the days when the teacher with her defined number of students would function as a closed ecology, in her own classroom, apart from the rest of the school and the home. That era is past. All who are involved in education today have a more complex and expanded role which stands in contrast to the isolated and restricted role of thirty years ago. The emerging role is characterized by collaborative teamwork. This paradigm shift reflects both an attitude change, and at a broader level, commitment to a much more inclusive philosophy vis-à-vis education. Morse (1996) succinctly described both the urgency and magnitude of the current thrust toward a collaborative model: "We either find a better way to relate to each other in solving our problems or we go down to defeat. Rejecting collaboration is not an option. Collaboration involves going beyond compromise and cooperation to shared understanding and shared meaning in decision making. This is not a simple upgrading: It is a transformation."

Friend and Cook (2003), in their discussion of collaboration within team settings, differentiated between the term *consultation* (which is, in their view, often characterized by an unequal relationship between participants) and the term *collaboration*. Their rather precise definition of collaboration spells out the difference: "Interpersonal collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two **co-equal parties** voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal" They see collaboration as having the following characteristics:

- Collaboration is voluntary.
- Collaboration requires parity among participants.
- Collaboration is based on mutual goals.
- Collaboration depends on shared responsibility for participation and decisions.
- Individuals who collaborate share their resources.
- Individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes.

If ever a group of parents were both necessary and deserving of membership on a school's collaborative team it would be parents of children with disabilities. However, involving parents of special needs children in the collaborative team process is not always a straightforward process. For a number of reasons parents may be reticent to become involved in the process.

If parents are to share essential information concerning their child and become a valuable resource helping to reinforce and continue educational intervention and programs at home, all efforts must be exerted to move them from the sidelines and instill a sense of empowerment and inclusion. As aptly stated by Rich (1987), "reaching the family is as important as reaching the child."

The literature on collaborative planning is indeed voluminous, however it is equally directive. This paper does not provide an exhaustive review of associated literature but rather provides an opportunity for educators to explore pragmatic ways to strengthen collaborative practice in their schools.

Dr. David Philpott is an Associate Professor and Dr. Wayne Nesbit is a Professor at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University.

This article is a summary of a research paper by the authors. The full paper and references can be accessed at **www.nlta.nl.ca**.

Calendar

Dates to Remember

January 2008

Jan 15	**Deadline:** 2008 Christmas Card Contest entries
Jan 15	**Deadline:** Receipt of Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop, and Special Recognition Award Nominations at the NLTA office
Jan 17	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
Jan 18-19	NLTA Executive Meeting

February 2008

Feb 1	**Deadline:** Applications for Educational Leave – teachers must make prior application to school board
Feb 14	Janeway Day in the Schools

March 2008

Mar 2-8	Education Week
Mar 20	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
Mar 31	**Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year
Mar 31	**Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
Mar 31	**Deadline:** (on or before March 31): International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2008

Apr 1	**Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
Apr 3	NLTA Executive Meeting
Apr 4-5	Joint Council Meeting
Apr 15	**Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

BANFF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2008: CREATING A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

February 20-22, 2008

Banff, Alberta. Canadian educational leaders are meeting again in Banff to hear, learn and share new ideas about leadership in education. You will have the opportunity to hear three published authors (Dr. Marcia Tate, Dr. James Stronge, Allison Zmuda) with international speaking, teaching and consulting experience. For more information and to register, go to www.creedseminars.com or call toll-free: 1-866-882-7333.

SHARING OUR CULTURES…
A LA DÉCOUVERTE DE NOS CULTURES

March 16-18, 2008

St. John's (Location to be announced). Sharing our Cultures…A la Découverte de Nos Cultures is an educational and multicultural event showcasing more than 25 countries and cultures of students in our schools. Theme: *Handicrafts of Our World.* Sunday, March 16 – Official opening for the public. Monday, March 17 and Tuesday, March 18 – for students Grades 4-6. Two sessions each day, either 9:15 - 11:00 a.m. or 12:15 - 2:00 p.m. Space is limited. Classes will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. For more information or to book your visit, please contact the event co-ordinator, Lloydetta Quaicoe, quaicoe@gmail.com.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRACTICAL STUDY OF LAW IN EDUCATION (CAPSLE) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 20-22, 2008

Halifax, NS. Theme: *Educational Leadership Today and Tomorrow: The Law as Friend or Foe.* Further information: www.capsle.ca.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONFERENCE

May 13-14, 2008

Holiday Inn, St.John's. The Newfoundland & Labrador Sexual Health Centre will be having the first ever conference on Sexual Health held in this province. For further information contact Karen Moores, Conference Coordinator, Tel: 709-579-1009; email: Karen.m@nlsexualhealthcentre.org.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

May 14-16, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Featuring speakers Dr. Avis Glaze: *Leadership Imperatives for Canadian School Administrators*; Barry MacDonald: *Mentoring Boys for Success at School*; Gwynne Dyer: *Changing Canadian Demographics and the Implications for Educational Leaders*; Alfie Kohn: *Testing and Grading and Homework – But Why? Rethinking Traditional Practices in Education.* A host of educators from our own province will offer a variety of interesting and informative concurrent sessions. For further information visit the conference website at www.cap2008.ca.

NLTA Christmas Hours